

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 10, 12 and 13 without prejudice.

Please amend claims 1, 5, 69, 72 and 91 as shown in clean form below pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.121(c)(1)(i). A marked-up version of the amended claims pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.121(c)(1)(ii) is provided separate from this amendment in Appendix I.

1. (Amended) A medical needle shield apparatus comprising:

A  
a monolithic needle hub including a collar; and

a shield having a proximal end receivable by the collar in an interlocking engagement and including a plurality of hingedly connected segments, the shield being extensible between a retracted position and an extended position.

5. (Amended) A medical needle shield apparatus comprising:

A2  
a needle hub having a collar defining an interior cavity, the needle hub supporting a needle having a distal end; and

a shield having a proximal end, a distal end and a lock disposed therebetween, the proximal end of the shield being receivable within the interior cavity of the collar in an interlocking engagement, the shield being manually extensible from a retracted position to an extended position wherein the lock captures a portion of the needle disposed proximal to the distal end of the needle in a configuration to prevent displacement of the shield from the

Q2 extended position and the distal end of the shield encloses at least a portion of the distal end of the needle.

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69. (Amended) A medical needle shield apparatus comprising:

a needle hub means for supporting a needle having a distal end; and

Q3 a shield means, having a proximal end, a distal end and a lock disposed therebetween, for engaging the needle hub means in an interlocking engagement, the shield means being manually extensible between a retracted position and an extended position wherein the lock captures a portion of the needle disposed proximal to the distal end of the needle in a configuration to prevent displacement of the shield means from the extended position and the distal end of the shield means encloses at least a portion of the distal end of the needle.

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72. (Amended) A medical needle shield apparatus comprising:

Q4 a needle hub having a collar and supporting a needle having a distal end;

a shield including a proximal end, a distal end and having at least one hinge, the proximal end of the shield being receivable by the collar in an interlocking engagement; and

a relief formed adjacent the at least one hinge and configured to flex inwardly.

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91. (Amended) A medical needle shield apparatus comprising:

a needle; and

AB  
a shield being extensible to an extended position, the shield having a linear bearing being hingedly connected to a portion of the shield disposed proximal to a distal end of the shield, the needle being slidably received by the linear bearing and the linear bearing being movable relative to the portion of the shield.